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# MALAYSIA

t o u r i s m



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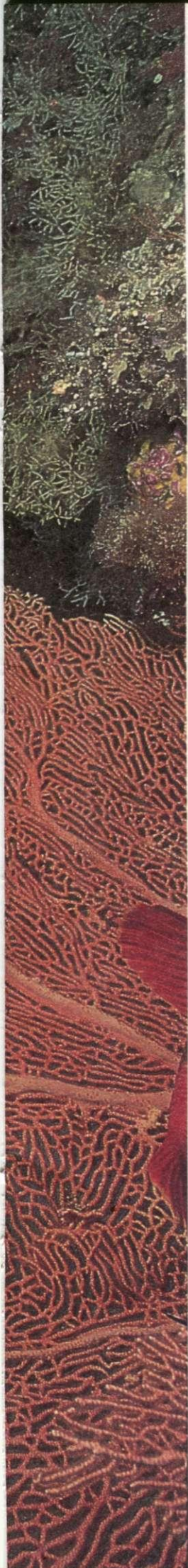


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Malaysia is blessed with an abundance of pristine natural resources. Our primeval rainforests are millions of years old, harbouring an amazing diversity of plant and animal life, and hitherto unknown substances that could have a profound impact on mankind's future.



We also have a marine environment of bounteous magnificence which, like our forests, have developed over hundreds of millions of years. The seas surrounding our land are filled with a glory of coral reefs that form a rich repository of marine life and provide us with the bulk of our seafood.

Our pristine environment has become a lure for tourists, and in light of this it is pertinent that each and every one of us understand the vital links of the environment to life, and do our part in the caring and conservation of these fragile ecosystems. In fact, as Malaysians, we have a duty to maintain our natural environment.

Tourism and environmental concerns are not mutually exclusive. The attitude of letting someone else worry about it is precisely why environmental considerations are often sacrificed in the interest of extra money. Understanding why coral reefs determine the fate of our seas, for instance, does not mean we would enjoy them less; it would in fact help us sell the treasures of our seas in a way that enhances the appreciation of our natural heritage, and help prevent their destruction. Efforts taken by the government would be thwarted if support is not forthcoming, and although there is some measure of sensitivity among the public and corporate sector to the needs of the environment, it would take a lot more. The tourism industry, too, has a part to play in the fate of our natural environment, and this calls for an involvement and commitment at all levels, from management to tour guides. Surely we wouldn't want to wait for the time when it becomes a case of too little, too late.

**ZAINUDDIN MOHD. ZAIN**

Director-General

Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia)



# MAY / JUNE '95 IN MALAYSIA



## SABAH FEST

(Kota Kinabalu, Sabah)

A colourful extravaganza showcasing the wealth and variety of Sabah's cultural heritage. Handicraft exhibitions and demonstrations, cultural performances and food promotions give an insight to the Sabahans' way of life and their rich traditions.

**20 - 29 May**

## LANGKAWI FESTIVAL

(Langkawi)

A two-week fest to showcase Langkawi's varied and unique attractions. Events scheduled include a beach carnival, cyclocross, telematch, golf tournament, bird singing competition and a trade exposition.

**20 May - 5 June**

## MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL KITE FESTIVAL

(Tumpat, Kelantan)

At this annual festival held at 'Pandan Sri Tujuh', Tumpat, some 700 colourful kites or *wau* are flown and displayed. Visitors will also see how these kites are made at nearby villages. The *wau* is very popular and has become a collector's item.

**25 - 29 May**

## PENANG INTERNATIONAL DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

(Gurney Drive, Penang)

This traditional dragon boat race attracts both local and foreign participants. The gaily decorated 12-metre-long boats give the annual event a festive air, and drums are beaten to dictate the pace of the respective teams.

**27 - 28 May**

## PENANG BRIDGE RUN

(Penang)

Local and foreign participants compete in this annual 21km run which includes crossing the 8 km Penang Bridge, Asia's longest bridge. There are live band performances and other activities specially lined up for the event.

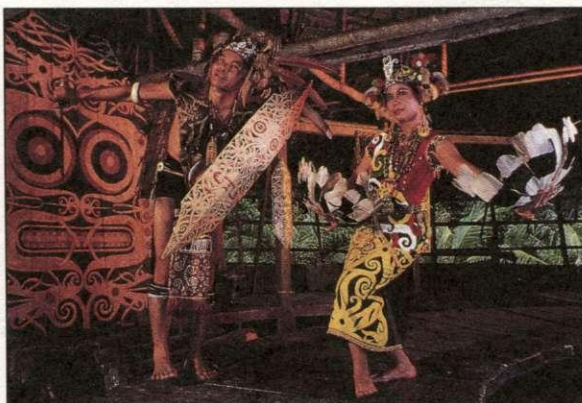
**28 May**

## GAWAI DAYAK

(Kuching, Sarawak)

Gawai Dayak heralds the gathering in of the harvest and the Iban New Year. At midnight the Miring ceremony is held in longhouses to seek heavenly blessings. Traditional *tuak* (rice wine), *pulut* and *lemang* are served. An occasion for family reunions, traditional dances and games.

**30 May - 2 June**



## SILAT FESTIVAL

(Tanah Merah, Kelantan)

Silat is the Malay art of self defence, practised in the Malay Archipelago for centuries. Silat demonstrations are also held during weddings, national celebrations, and has, in recent years, attracted international participation.

**7 - 8 June**

## FESTIVAL OF SAN PEDRO

(Portuguese Settlement, Bandar Hilir, Malacca)

Celebrated by the Portuguese to commemorate the birth of Saint Pedro, the patron saint of the Portuguese Fishing Community. Boats are gaily decorated and there is singing and dancing.

**27 - 29 June**

Dates and events listed  
are correct at the  
time of printing





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Diver observing  
a sea fan with a  
soldier fish in  
front. Picture by  
**DANIEL  
D'ORVILLE**

# MALAYSIA

tourism

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## Tourism Malaysia Diary

May 3-10	Food & Cultural Promotion, Chiangmai (Thailand)
May 21-June 1	Sales Mission to Japan (Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Fukuoka)
May 25-28	Overseas Travel Fair, Seoul, (South Korea)
June 1-4	International Travel Expo (ITE '95), Hong Kong
June 4-10	Sales Mission to Taiwan (Taipei, Kaoshiung)
June 21-July 2	Sales Mission to Argentina (Beunos Aires, Cardoba)



# REAPING THE WINDFALL

*Where did the biggest increase in inbound tourist traffic come from in 1994? Thailand? Singapore? Wrong on both counts.*

By Cheah Boon Kit

The biggest surge of tourists came not from traditional markets, but one that did not exist just three years ago — South Africa.

In 1992, the number of tourists from Africa's most dynamic economy amounted to 3,432. In 1993, however, the number jumped to 11,813, a whopping 244% increase.

Nor does that growth show any sign of diminishing. Up to May 1994, a total of 7,296 South African tourists had visited the country, more than double the 3,431 that came in during the same period in 1993.

Slated as the 25th most popular tourist generating market, South Africa moved up to the No. 20 spot in just a year, a formidable achievement in the light of the limited interest shown by the Malaysian travel trade in the sector.

The peak season appears to be between April and July (which in 1993 accounted for 3,983 or 34% of total South African arrivals) and from October to December (4,381 or 37%).

Most South African tourists (82%) came in directly by air. However, a significant proportion (13%) hopped in from neighbouring countries. The number of males and

females were fairly evenly balanced. The sex ratio, and the fact that most (84%) were in the 25-34 age group and above, implies that the tourists were largely couples, with or without families.

Further analysis of the age group distribution indicates that younger couples (25-44 years) constituted 48% of the visitors, while older tourists (45 and above) constituted a respectable 35.4%. The number of young tourists (below 25 years) accounted for only 16.5%.

In short, South African tourists view

4.7 days for all tourists.

Average per capita expenditure for South African tourists in 1993 was RM1,978, while total revenues are estimated at RM 23.4 million. This amounted to 0.46% of the gross tourism revenue for the year, a significant amount considering the small proportion (0.2%) of South African tourist flow into Malaysia.

The South African market thus represents a truly exciting market for inbound travel agencies. There already appears to be a considerable amount of goodwill among



Malaysia as a family holiday destination, be it as a family (the likely scenario for younger couples) or even as a pair (the more probable case for older couples).

Almost all the arrivals were confined to Peninsular Malaysia. Sabah and Sarawak remain yet an enigma to South African tourists.

The average length of stay of the South African tourist is 5.2 days, well above the overall average of

South Africans towards Malaysia. Malaysia has played a strong part in international efforts to end apartheid while continuing afterwards to help rebuild the South African economy. The goodwill that has accrued from these altruistic efforts has given a good image of the country to South Africans, and local operators should take advantage of this in tapping what may end up as the most exciting tourist market in recent years.





A coral reef and its denizens

# KINGDOM OF THE FATHOMS

*Coral reefs have become major tourist draws, and our pristine marine environment has contributed significantly to making tourism revenue one of the largest sources of foreign exchange in the country. But lest we forget the real importance of corals in the midst of this excitement, aquaculture and environmental consultant N. Gopinath reminds us that corals are extremely fragile and sensitive, and must be saved at all cost.*

It is easy to take a coral reef for granted. For most people, it is just a pile of attractively arranged rocks around which congregate schools of equally dazzling fish. To describe coral reefs as simply attractive is to trivialise their real value because if it were not for coral reefs, much of the marine life and seafood that we take so much for granted would not be around.

Coral reefs are a vital link in our marine ecosystem. Made of the skeletons of coral polyps, tiny invertebrates with calcareous shells that otherwise pass their time innocuously in the ocean depths, reefs often represent the cumulative effort of billions of animals over thousands of years. There are many kinds of coral polyps, and in both life and death, these animals take

on distinct shapes and colour. The average coral reef thus becomes a kaleidoscopic jungle of shapes, shadows and shades.

Malaysian seas have the most diverse and pristine of coral reefs. A good reef has over 150 species of coral. Almost all the coral species known are represented in Sipadan, Sabah, often described as one of the most beautiful coral reefs in the world. However, even the ones off the east coast of the peninsula are considered world class. Like our forests, our reefs have had hundreds of millions of years to grow and develop. In the process, their undisturbed antiquity has allowed them the luxury of evolution and adaptation, spawning a profusion of coral species that few other places in the world can match.



However, spectacular as they are, it is not the corals themselves that are the main actors in the reef. The reef dwellers usually take centre stage. The plethora of animal and plant life that live and thrive in a coral reef is truly staggering. From algae to zebra fish, the diversity found in the reef makes it the most productive ecosystem in nature, second only to the dense rainforests that dominate so much of the Malaysian landscape.

The reef and its dwellers are part of an intricate web that sustain the marine environment. Many fish of commercial value live in reefs. Groupers, shads, congers, and others hide and thrive in the reef.

More important, reefs are nursery grounds for many species. Almost all fish of commercial value, from mackerels, tuna to snappers and sea bass, spend some part of their life cycle in the coral. The numerous interstices in the reef provide a wealth of hiding space from predators while the abundance of animal and plant life provide the necessary forage base to grow to adulthood.

If those credentials seem impressive, they look diminutive next to the yet untapped potentials that await us. Recent research has revealed the presence of numerous organic chemicals in coral reef organisms, especially sponges and tunicates. Many of these have valuable pharmaceutical properties. Some are potential anti-carcinogens. As research into the field continues, more and more chemicals are being discovered. Like a recently discovered treasure trove, coral reefs continue to surprise the world.

However, like the ugly duckling whose ravishing persona as a swan is revealed only after a traumatic childhood, coral reefs in the past

A scorpion fish on the seabed off Pulau Tenggol (right) and patch coral reefs fringing Pulau Redang (below)



were abused as navigational inconveniences and useless rock piles.

At one time, coral reefs were mined (that is, destroyed) for their value as clinker for making roads. In many places, coral reefs were routinely removed because they were in the way of boat traffic or fishing. Anchors have torn their way through coral reefs as many ships use them for mooring, leaving dead plant and animal life in their wake.

Corals are extremely sensitive to changes in water quality. Increasing turbidity due to siltation or organic pollution can smother or choke them. Tragically, something like 80% of the world's coral reefs have been damaged in some form or another.

The effect of coral reef destruction has been particularly pervasive in the Philippines. The use of explosives to catch fish, particularly coral fish for the aquarium market, has



led to the destruction of corals throughout the country. As a consequence, fish landings have been seriously affected, displacing fishermen and causing the prices of fish to rise.

In this otherwise depressing scenario, Malaysian coral reefs have come away pretty unscathed. The

Most coral reefs in the country fringe offshore islands. They are generally characterised by a flat reef that extends gently towards the sea that is exposed at low tide. The reef flat then suddenly drops off at the seaward edge till it bottoms out at about 14 to 30 metres. It is at this slope that the densest coral growth occurs. The reef may then rise in small patches.

Patch reefs are ideal for snorkelling, since they are shallow yet pristine enough to support a sizable coral and fish life.

The vital role these coral reefs play in the maintenance of the marine ecosystem has long been recognised by the Malaysian fisheries and environmental authorities. The concern is not simply academic. There are some 80,000 fishermen in

every major town, the frequency with which one meets a hawker serving seafood and the variety of seafood dishes in almost every restaurant menu reflects the Malaysian passion for seafood. The loss of coral reefs would reach out to every Malaysian heart, if not the pocket.

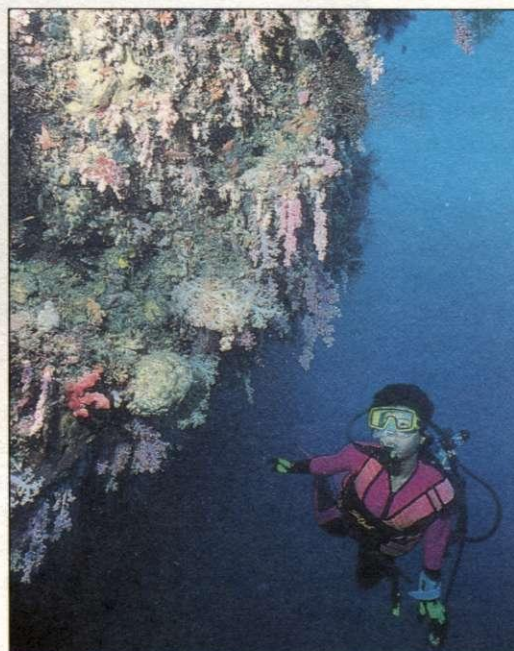
Thus the conservation of our coral reefs has been given the highest priority by our marine management authorities. Almost all major reefs have been gazetted as marine parks and are heavily protected by the authorities, with stringent conditions introduced by the Fisheries Department to protect our still unsullied reef resources. To date there are five marine parks in Peninsular Malaysia (Pulau Payar Marine Park in Kedah; Pulau Tioman in Pahang; Pulau Aur in Johor; Pulau Perhentian-Redang in Terengganu; and one in Labuan) and two more in Sabah and Sarawak. Together, they encompass almost all the viable reef resources of the country.

Park regulations are friendly but strict. Visitors are welcome. In fact, the Department of Fisheries goes out of its way to encourage the public to visit the park. Park rangers are at hand to provide advice and guidance on the best

diving spots. All marine parks have information centres where one can pick up literature or browse through displays of life found on the reef. Through a heightened awareness of

use of deleterious fishing methods have never been allowed, nor has pleasure boating and shipping developed to the point where the reefs were at risk. Development on offshore islands have been limited, up till recently, and siltation has not been a major concern. Malaysian reefs are still pristine and undisturbed — a rare situation in the world today.

the country who depend on the marine environment for their livelihood. In addition, fish is a basic staple in the Malaysian diet. The profusion of seafood eateries that enliven



The hanging gardens of Sipadan





Coral creatures: A butterfly fish in between staghorn coral (above) and a nudibranch (below) off Pulau Tenggol



the beauty and complexities of our marine environment, the Department hopes to inculcate a culture of caring for the coral reef and its denizens.

At the same time, the department is uncompromising where conservation is concerned. Collection of coral rocks and fish are strictly forbidden. Fishing in the park, particularly spear fishing, is forbidden and carries hefty fines and jail sentences.

Park rangers also regularly remove debris and coral predators like the Crown of Thorns starfish from the reefs.

However, enforcement personnel cannot be everywhere all the time. It is the trouble we take as Malaysians to care for our coral reefs that is going to mediate their long-term survival.

Already the public has shown a far greater awareness and sensitivity to the needs of our reef environment. For instance, efforts by the

park rangers to remove the Crown of Thorns starfish are often collectively taken together with a volunteers, such as the Malaysian Society for Marine Sciences. The corporate sector has also begun contributing to this effort, in tandem with its desire to be responsible corporate citizens. Hong Kong Bank, for instance, actively supports coral reef research and expeditionary activity as well as educational programmes on the subject. More companies and organisations should come forward to augment such efforts.

There are many things we as individuals can do, such as not removing corals from the sea or col-

they remain in captivity till death, which usually occurs within a few months.

Boats should be moored only at designated mooring buoys to avoid damage through anchorage. And we should avoid stepping on corals. Even the mundane is of vital significance to a sensitive environment like the coral reef. For instance, the simple expedience of disposing refuse in the appropriate place can be of critical importance. Turtles are known to have choked on plastic bags which they mistook for jelly-fish, their favourite food.

Individuals must recognise that it is they and not some anonymous



Hard corals in the waters off Pulau Tenggol

lecting coral fish. Corals and coral fish have developed an intact relationship that span the millenniums. Catching them and transporting them to some distinct, artificial clime can have devastating effect on them.

It is a known fact that most of the coral and coral reef life that are caught for the aquarium fish trade die in transit. Even those that do survive end up a wasted resource. Many marine fish breed only under exacting circumstances that cannot be replicated in an aquarium. Thus

bureaucracy that will ultimately determine the health of our marine environment. They must play a role in ensuring that our coral resources remain undisturbed for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. In short, the future of Malaysian coral reefs and the valuable life associated with them is in the hands of the people who visit them, who view them and who depend on them. Have we left anyone out?

(Pictures by Daniel D'Orville of Borneo Divers. Tel: 03-7173066.)





## MATTA'S MEGA FAIR

The MATTA International Travel Fair 1995 (MITF '95) organised by the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) over two days beginning 11 March drew together 77 exhibitors, mainly industry operators and national tourism organisations, from 17 countries. YB Dato' Sabbaruddin Chik (picture above, 3rd from right), Malaysia's Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism, launched the fair. Tourism Malaysia occupied one of the 230 booths at the fair.

This year's focus was on outbound travel as many of the participants were promoting overseas packages. The event attracted some 21,000 visitors.

Awards for the most creative booths were given to the Australian Tourist Commission (picture below) in the general category, and Ken Air Services Sdn. Bhd. in the travel agents section.



## Wooing ICTA members

Hong Kong travel agents were shown around Sarawak from 11-14 March in a bid to create greater awareness of the East Malaysian state among the colony's populace.

The 26 members of the International Chinese Tourist Association (ICTA), a Hong Kong-based Travel Association with members ranging from industry operators to travel writers, were taken on the familiarisation tour by Tourism Malaysia with a view to encourage the ICTA to hold its annual convention in Malaysia, and its members to package Malaysia as a holiday destination.

Sarawak was chosen as it is a relatively new destination for the Hong Kong market. Dragonair, in conjunction with its twice-weekly service from Hong Kong to Kuching, flew the agents into Sarawak. The group visited Kuching, Batang Ai and Damai Beach during the tour.



## IN THE HEART OF THE JUNGLE

SINGAPORE tour agents and corporate executives sampled trekking, white water rafting in Taman Negara in a familiarisation trip from 21-26 February. Organised jointly by Tourism Malaysia and Taman Negara Resort, the venue was chosen because it is relatively a new destination for Singaporeans and one of the eight promoted this year. The group of 27 was hosted by Istana Hotel in Kuala Lumpur.





In an effort to promote domestic tourism, Tourism Malaysia is sponsoring a radio programme that gives local visitors a run-down of events and activities in and around the country.

Called *Malaysia Destinasi Mempesonakan*, or "Malaysia — Fascinating Destination", the programme also gives information on new tourism-related products.

The 45-minute programme, begun on 7 March, will run for six months. It goes on the air at 4.15pm every Tuesday and Thursday over Radio 1.

The programme features interviews with the Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism, the Secretary-General of the Ministry, and top personnel of Tourism Malaysia, led by its Director-General, En. Zainuddin



Zain (picture above). There is also a quiz competition at the end of each programme, and listeners may call in and win prizes that range from free hotel accommodation and meal vouchers to domestic tour

packages, courtesy of various industry sponsors.

Response to the radio show has been tremendous since it started.

## Treasured Find

Not all marriages are made in heaven. Tourism Malaysia was an unwitting "matchmaker" when it introduced two Japanese journalists to each other during a treasure hunt in Sarawak last August.

And when the couple expressed a wish to take their nuptial vows in true Iban tradition, the national tourism authority took the initiative. There was no lack of helping hands either; generous sponsors rallied to make it a memorable occasion.

So it came to be that on March 12, Eri Osato and her groom Masahiro Fujii went through a mix of Iban and Malay marriage rites at

the Sarawak Cultural Village in Kuching, witnessed by a host of well-wishers.

Osaka-based Eri and Masahiro, who lives in Tokyo, had been part of the International Press Tour of Malaysia (IPTOM) 1994, an annual treasure hunt organised by Tourism Malaysia and Malaysia Airlines. The 10-day drive from Kuching to Miri included trips to Batang Ai and Mulu.

Eri and Masahiro were married after they returned to Japan. But their fascination with Iban culture brought them back to Sarawak — where they had found each other — for a second wedding. In their entourage were their parents and six Japanese journalists.

Among the sponsors of both wedding and press trip were the Sarawak Ministry of Tourism, Holiday Inn Damai Beach, Sarawak Cultural Village, Damai Lagoon Resort, Rihga Royal in Miri, Royal Mulu Resort, Malaysia Airlines, Tropical Adventure, Tourism Malaysia's Kuching and Osaka office.



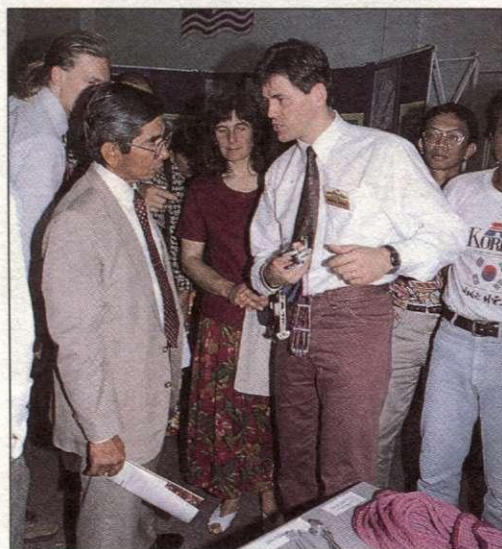


# HEIGHTS OF CHALLENGE

**M**ountaineering in Malaysia formed the focus of a seminar organised by Tourism Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur from 16 to 18 April.

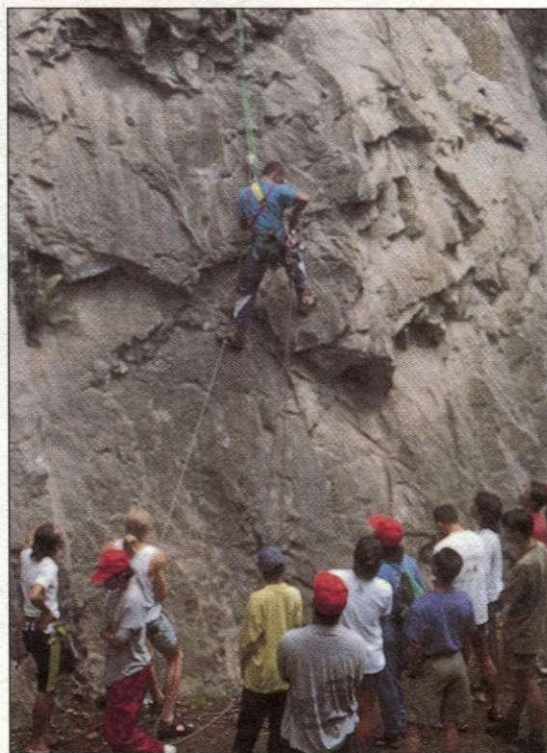
The Introduction to Mountaineering in Malaysia seminar, the first of its kind to be held in the country, was organised with the support of Malaysia Airlines, Kuala Lumpur Mountaineering Association, Association of Backpackers Malaysia, Malaysia Youth Council and Base Camp Sdn. Bhd. The purpose of the seminar was to introduce mountaineering to young Malaysians and to deal with various aspects of the sport, such as leadership training, techniques and expeditions.

Launched by the Secretary-General of the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry, YB Dato' Khalid Ismail (picture, left), it was attended by about 250 participants, some of whom were students.



Local and foreign experts spoke on a range of subjects from rock climbing skills and the impact on the environment.

A practical rock-climbing session at Batu Caves on the last day wound up the seminar.



**ENTRIES** received so far for this year's Floral Parade — the grand finale of the 1995 Flora Fest 0are Kuala Lumpur City Hall, Petronas, Sabah, Malaysia Airlines, Pahang, Singapore, Thailand, Penang, Kedah, Berjaya and Bank Pertanian.

Other confirmed events are:

- International Flower Expo (1-4 July), at Level 2, Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur;
- Flora Hunt (2 July), at Lake Gardens, Kuala Lumpur;
- Exhibition of Flora Fest "Fun In The Sun" Photography Competition Entries (2-9 July), at the ground floor of Bukit Bintang Plaza;
- Hotels and Shopping Complexes Lobby Floral Decoration Competition (2-9 July); and
- Demonstration and Workshop on Use of Flowers in Malaysian Society (5 July); Venue: TBA.



For more information contact:  
The Secretariat, Flora Fest '95,  
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## ITALIAN JOB

Italy's largest and most popular travel fair has been on Tourism Malaysia's agenda for the past 10 years. This year was no different.

The Malaysian delegation to the Borsa Internazionale del Turismo (BIT) or International Tourism Exchange: Milan Fair from 22-26 February, was headed by Director-General En. Zainuddin Mohd Zain and made up of 29 representatives from 26 organisations. A total of 152 countries were represented, taking up some 4,770 booths. More than 120,000 people visited the fair.



## Scots lawyer wins Penang holiday

A lawyer from Glasgow has won a week's holiday in Penang in a competition that offered a taste of Malaysia organised by Tourism Malaysia's London Office.

The competition centred on the only Malaysian restaurant in Scotland, the Mata Hari. Mrs Anna Murray beat more than 1,000 others who had entered the competition.

When Anna went to collect her prize, she got to ride in a trishaw accompanied by Mata



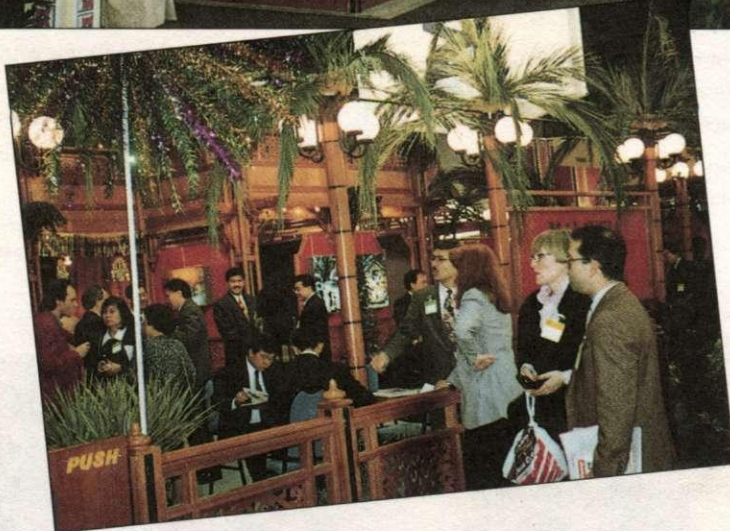
Hari restaurateur Mrs Hing Fung Teh and pedalled by a Scots piper (picture). The trishaw had been specially flown to Britain to raise funds for charity.

Tourism Malaysia's London Office Director, En. Mohd. Zuhuri Ahmad, said the competition was held to encourage more tourists from across UK to visit Malaysia.

Mrs Murray's holiday comes courtesy of the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts.



# A GERMAN HARI RAYA



**I**TB Berlin '95, held from 4 - 8 March, marked Tourism Malaysia's 22nd year of participation. The Malaysian delegation to the International Tourismus Borse (International Tourism Exchange) was led by En. Khairuddin Mohd. Sari, Deputy Director-General (Operations) and included over 70 representatives from state governments, tour operators, hotels and resorts.

The Malaysian delegation, clad in colourful *baju Melayu* and *baju kurung*, hosted a Hari Raya Aidilfitri reception at the stand on the first day for visiting buyers, inviting them to sample *ketupat*, *serunding* and *murtabak*.

The following day, a Friends of Malaysia reception was organised at the Palace Hotel Berlin for 160 travel trade members and media representatives.

En. Khairuddin also presented the Long Service Appreciation Award to Mrs Teng Shchlussel of Tourism Malaysia's Frankfurt Office.

## The MICE Advantage

**K**een to promote Malaysia as a meeting venue and incentive travel destination, Tourism Malaysia took part in Confex '95, a major exhibition for meetings and incentive travel for the UK market.

About 7,000 trade people visited the exhibition from 21 to 23 February at Earl's Court II, London.

Tourism Malaysia was joined by Malaysia Airlines, Shangri-la Hotels and Resorts, Federal Hotels and the Singapore Mandarin International Group.







## WORKING ON HK OPERATORS

A Malaysia Tourism Workshop was jointly organised by Tourism Malaysia's Hong Kong Office, SMI Hotels & Resorts and Malaysia Airlines on 15 February.

The objectives of the workshop were to provide an update on tourism developments in Malaysia; to inform the local trade of this year's promotions; and to thank participants for their support during the Visit Malaysia Year '94 campaign.

Over 80 tour operators, media and officials of Malaysia Airlines (MAS-HK) attended the session. There were several questions regarding Taman Negara, travel options and flight frequencies to Malaysia.

The turnout and feedback was encouraging as some participants showed a keenness to promote Malaysia as a holiday destination.

There was also a lucky draw, and winners received MAS tickets to Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

## ASIA PACIFIC POTENTIAL

Malaysia received an overwhelming response at the Asia Pacific International Meeting Expo (AIME) in Melbourne, Australia. Tourism Malaysia's Sydney Office, with the cooperation of Malaysia Airlines, participated in the two-day expo beginning 23 February.

Also making a presence were five private sector companies — Triways Travel Sdn. Bhd., M-Vision Travel Sdn. Bhd., Asian Overland Services, Pan Pacific Kuala Lumpur and The Legend Hotel.

The number of buyers from the Asia Pacific region who called at the Malaysian booth exceeded expectations, and kept the Malaysian officials busy throughout the two days.

The tropical glass house in Britain's Birmingham Botanical Gardens houses some of the most exotic and luxuriant flora found in the rainforests of Malaysia.

The plants not only attract visitors, they make wonderful subjects of art too, as children from the Whittington Oval Primary School show (picture).

Tropical flora is also the topic of a competition organised by Tourism Malaysia's London Office together with Far East tour specialists Magic of the Orient.

The competition, based on questions about plants found in Malaysia's primeval rainforests, carries the prize of a week-long adventure for two in the jungles of Sabah.

According to Tourism Malaysia's London Office Director, En. Mohd. Zuhuri Ahmad, television programmes such as the *Private Life of Plants* have created interest in the

## Fascinating Flora



flora and fauna of rainforests that have been untouched for millions of years. "As Britain is Malaysia's biggest market for long-haul visitors, we are trying to cater for more who want to experience the diversity and beauty of our country," he added.





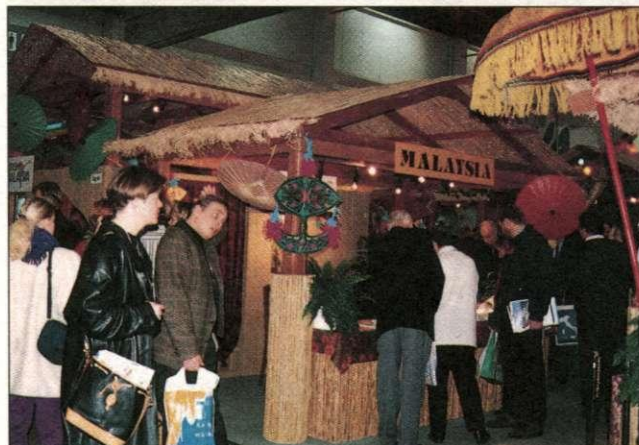
## SCANNING SCANDINAVIA

Sweden's largest annual international travel fair, TÜR '95, rounded up a series of Scandinavian trade shows held between January and March. Tourism Malaysia's Stockholm Office took a booth at all the fairs, with support from Malaysia Airlines.

TUR '95 (picture above), held in Goteborg from 23 to 26 March, was by far the largest, drawing a total of 51,341 visitors who had come to browse at booths occupied by some 1,600 exhibitors from 97 countries. Participants were mostly industry operators, national tourism organisations, airlines and other transportation organisations, hotels and rental companies.

The other three fairs, also annual international events, were REISLIV '95 (picture, bottom right) in Oslo, Norway (12-15 Jan), MATKA RESA '95 (picture below) in Helsinki, Finland (19-22 Jan) and FERIE '95 (picture, right) in Copenhagen, Denmark (26-29 Jan).

Tourism Malaysia organised a consumer quiz at Ferie '95 in Denmark, while at TUR '95 there were two slide shows in addition to a quiz for



consumers. Promotional material focused on the destinations promoted in the new 8-Destination Campaign, with emphasis on Sarawak. The quiz, in particular, was popular and about 2,500 entries were received. The winning entrant will receive a one-week holiday for two in Malaysia.



## Hung(a)ry for a new market



For the first time Tourism Malaysia participated in UTAS '95, an expo organised by the Tourist Studio of Hung Expo Co. Ltd. in Budapest, Hungary.

A total of 490 exhibitors from 34 countries took part in the prestigious event, held from 16 to 19 March.

Tourism Malaysia's participation was to make an official presence at the expo, promote the country as a holiday destination and create awareness among Hungarian agents. It also served to establish contacts, explore new business opportunities and to evaluate the potential of the Hungarian market. Some 5,000 visitors stopped at the Malaysian stand.

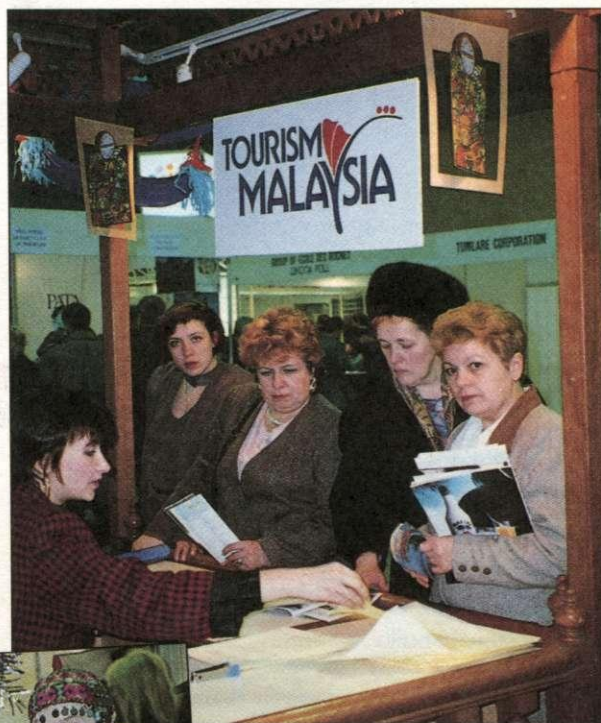
## MAKING INROADS INTO RUSSIA

At the second Moscow International Travel & Tourism Show (MITT) '95, Tourism Malaysia's Malay-design booth turned out to be a crowd puller.

It was Malaysia's second showing at the 2nd Moscow International Travel & Tourism Show (MITT) '95 in the city of Moscow, Russian Federation.

The objective of Malaysia's attendance at the Moscow show from 21 to 25 March was to introduce the country as a holiday destination to this new market. It provided opportunities for Malaysian trade representatives to establish contacts with their Russian counterparts and to explore new business opportunities. At the same time it allowed an evaluation of the potential of the Russian market.

Tourism Malaysia's Director of Market Development, Miss Cindy Lim, led the delegation which

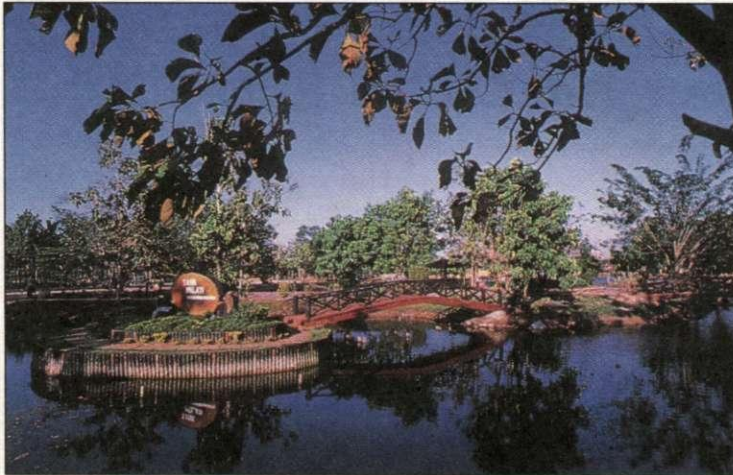


included representatives from eight private sector organisations. The Malaysian Embassy in Russia extended invaluable assistance and support.

Some 1,500 organisations from 60 countries participated in the show which received about 100,000 visitors.



Courtesy Perlis State Economic Planning Unit



By R. Krishna

The country's smallest state spreads a mere 81,000 hectares along its north-east border with Thailand. However, while its attractions are relatively unheralded, lovers of rustic country life and magnificent scenery will find Perlis' charms difficult to resist.

Unexpected outcrops of limestone hills break the horizon, and blankets of paddy fields flank the road in shades of fresh green or golden-brown, depending on the season.

Life in this predominantly agricultural state is leisurely, but while it invites you to gradually unwind in its atmosphere, the state does offer some tourist attractions too.

At Kaki Bukit, a 500m long cave passage gives visitors the chance to walk through a limestone hill. Gua Kelam, the Cave of Darkness, was formed by an underground stream.

A suspension bridge has been built through the cave, and floodlights highlight the acid rain-worn formations. Because it opens on both ends, a cool fresh breeze blows through perpetually, and at the end of the tunnel is a pretty picnic area.

An unusual but interesting spot to visit is the Perlis Snake Farm — though not for the squeamish. Over 2,000 snakes live in open-air enclosures in this research centre. It is also the only facility in the country that develops and test serums for snake-bites. The farm is 20 minutes from Kangar in Sungai Batu Pahat, where a variety of activities is held

throughout the year. Nearby are an aviary, chalets, and a golf course. There are plans to upgrade a nearby public park — the country's oldest.

The serenity of Perlis' hills can be appreciated at Melati Lake. A small but picturesque lake, it sits in partially marshy lowland and offers lovely picture possibilities. Dotted with 150 sandbar 'islands', there are facilities for rowing and opportunities for

new jetty can also be taken as an interesting alternative route to Thai towns such as Satun and even Phuket.

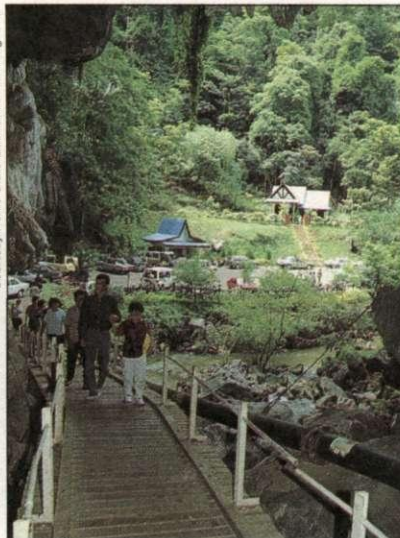
A new state park is in the making that will boost ecotourism, and adventure caving in particular.

In addition, events are held throughout the year to encourage visitors to the state. Perennial favourites in terms of activities range from a bird singing competition to floral, handicraft and cultural fests.

The state economic development corporation plans to do promotions at state carnivals and the September Malaysia Fest in Kuala Lumpur.

Perlis is also part of the Northern Region Joint Tourism Committee which will be promoting the state at a travel fair in Perth, Australia. The other members of that committee

Courtesy Perlis State Economic Planning Unit



Perlis attractions: Tasik Melati (top), Gua Kelam (above), and the Snake Farm (right)

fishing. Every October, a water festival attracts loads of families.

A matrix of six streets makes up Kuala Perlis. Situated at the Sungai Perlis delta, this port is well-known for its seafood.

However, its hottest tourism selling point is as a jump-off point to Langkawi. Ferries ply the 50-minute route regularly, and boats from the

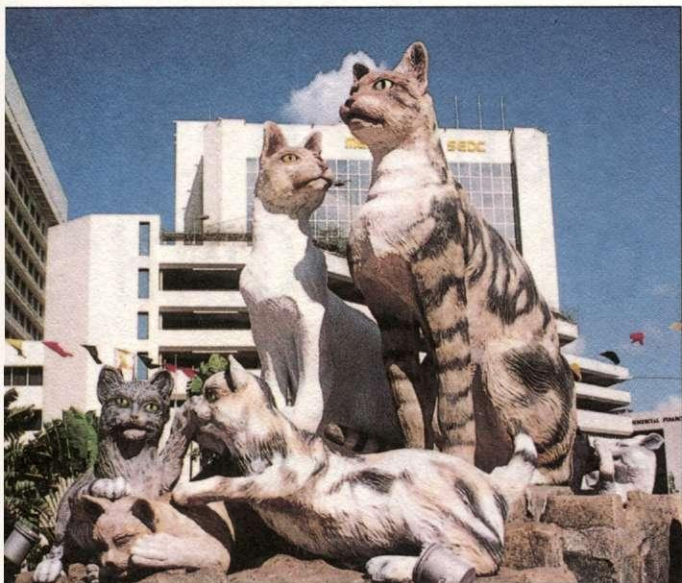


are Kedah, Penang and Perak.

With such temptations, the state is indeed providing no excuse not to pay it a visit, if only to bask in the warmth of its peacefulness.

More information can be obtained from the Perlis State Economic Planning Unit; (04)-976-1088/1957.





## The cats of Kuching

In Malay, the word *kucing* means "cat". In Sarawak, the word Kuching means a vibrant city of 300,000 with a charming old town, and the capital of this Malaysian State. The town Kuching wasn't really named after a cat, but after a fruit of the lychee family, *buah mata kucing* (cat's eye fruit). A hill behind the original settlement was covered in mata kucing trees long ago.

But why be pedantic about a name? The good townsfolk of Kuching like cats, and felines love the riverside capital where fresh fish is abundant all the time.

The city fathers decided to suit their actions to the word, and adopt the cat as their standard and device. The official crest of Kuching features a cat. Kuching has Malaysia's, possibly the world's, only Cat Museum. The town's promotion to

city status in 1988 was celebrated with the erection of the Great Cat of Kuching, a 10-foot feline, at the city gates.

The latest addition to Kuching's kucing are a kindle of kittens supervised by a pair of somewhat grim-looking elders, near the town's major hotels. That's the sort of art we like around here. Nine Lives to Kuching! — **Heidi Munan**

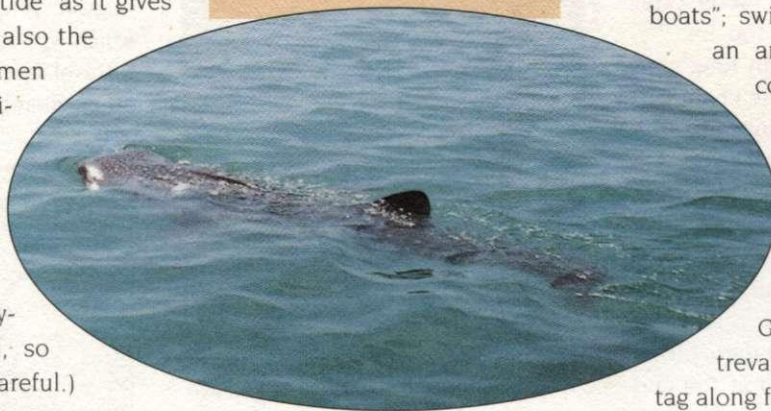
They're a rare sight, but whale sharks have been sighted off Pulau Langkawi with unerring regularity the past few years.

A plankton boom in the waters around Langkawi in November beckons the whale sharks. Some refer to the plankton bloom as "the red tide" as it gives the sea a red hue. It's also the season when fishermen reap their most bountiful harvests. The creatures of the sea know it is feeding time around the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. (A lot of jellyfish is found as well, so swimmers should be careful.)

Sometimes it is possible to spot as many as a dozen whale sharks in a pod swimming close to the surface with their five-foot mouths wide open, filtering water through a series of 10 gill slits for plankton — microscopic organisms, mainly larvae of bottom-dwelling creatures such as crabs and shrimps.

Whale sharks are so big they have no natural predators — they measure about 24 to 36 feet, the length of a fiberglass boat that takes people island hopping — but

## Tale of a Whale



gentler giants we would not find.

Whale sharks have natural navigational abilities that take them thousands of miles to Langkawi every year, and highly developed sonar systems to detect concentrations of plankton.

They also make great "passenger boats"; swimming under them is an array of fish, the most common being the sucker fish, so named from a suction cup at the back of its neck which it uses to stick itself to the shark's underside. Game fishes such as trevally, jack and cobia also tag along for free use of one of the best sonar devices at sea; plankton attracts

bait fish, their main diet.

Whether the whale sharks are on a migratory route or whether Langkawi is one of their feeding stations has yet to be determined. It is not known either whether the same sharks make the annual trip. Increasing pollution, however, may prevent them from detecting plankton. And if that happens one of the oldest inhabitants of the sea may stop calling at Langkawi. — **Eric Chong**





## WONDER CURE

A slimy, unsightly sea cucumber has been found to contain properties that can heal all sorts of ailments, from ulcers and piles to cuts and toothache.

Legend has it that a fisherman once stepped on this "healing" sea slug — known in Malay as gamat — as he was walking on the beach of Langkawi and found it left a sticky substance that stuck like glue to his legs. Angered that he had to shave his legs to remove the substance, the fisherman hacked at the slugs with his rusty old axe. A short while later he walked the same way and was shocked to see the creatures whole again.

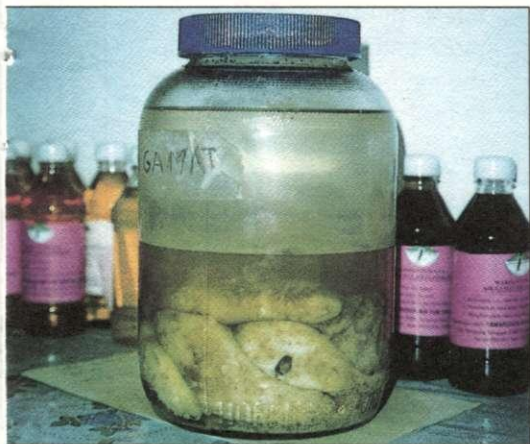
Whether the story is true or not, the processing of minyak gamat has been so lucrative that it has almost wiped out this specie of sea cucumber from the reefs around Langkawi. Much of the supply these days comes from Thailand.

The remedy of sorts is prepared and packaged in two forms: an ointment for external application; and a liquid for consumption called ayer gamat.

Minyak gamat is sold for RM2 up at speciality shops in Langkawi located along the road from Padang Matsirat to Kuala Teriang, which is around the airport area. It can also be found at Tanjung Rhu.

Another species of the sea cucumber, called Hoi Sam in Chinese, is known and sought for its aphrodisiac properties. Looking very much like gamat except that it is jet black, Hoi Sam is prepared as a delicacy.

— Eric Chong



## See Kee's Karipap

At the very core of the huge concrete mass Kuala Lumpur has become stands an insignificant karipap stall ... like no other. See Kee, who owns the stall, has been selling karipaps in Imbi Square since 1962, and has endured the metamorphosis of Bukit Bintang into a swanky shopping district.

What started out as a doughnut stand has evolved into what most KLites would acknowledge as the best karipaps they have ever eaten. (The karipap is a fried, crisp version of the baked curry puff.)



There are a few things that make See Kee's karipaps a savoury treat unequalled. Firstly, the filling ... chicken, mutton or prawn salad is the result of carefully guarded secret recipes. Secondly, they are made from the freshest ingredients. The marketing is done at 4 every morning and the filling prepared daily.

The scrumptious delights are always warm if not hot, the reason being that they are fried in batches at his nearby home by his wife and children. For 60 sen, See Kee gives a mix of tingling flavours and rich meat and potato stuffing fried in tasty pastry. So popular are his karipaps that they vanish within three hours. (See Kee sets up stall at 8 in the morning.) — A. Jegadeva



# ON TOP OF THE WORLD

*Gunung Korbu, second highest peak in the peninsula, is fast becoming popular with climbers*

By F. Tim

In the past it took at least two days to trek up Gunung Korbu in Perak, which at 2,183 metres is just four metres lower than Gunung Tahan.

But now a logging track accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles makes it possible to reach the peak in less than a day.

Climbers, however, should notify the police when planning an expedition, to avoid being caught in the middle of a training session by the armed forces.

Our trek began about 600m from the foothill located off Tanjung Rambutan, about 16km from Ipoh. With us were two Orang Asli porters engaged from a nearby settlement.

We trekked for about 45 minutes under the scorching morning sun along a logging track with deep gullies cut by rain waters before entering the jungle. The trail traversed the side of the mountain and we had to climb up a rocky

stretch under the forest canopy.

By noon we had reached a small waterfall where we broke for lunch. One of the porters told us this would be the last water point. After filling 10 water bottles, we resumed our trek, first up a steep slope which looked like it would never end.



Trekkers tackling a steep slope



At the summit of Gunung Korbu (left) and the view around it (above left)

Plants to look out for in the cool jungle include the rafflesia, *tongkat ali*, *bunga ka chip fatimah*, *upah* roots and herbs. We also noticed that the trail was littered with plastic bags, bottles, tin cans and gas canisters. Litter literally marked the path. A first-timer needs only to keep close to the rubbish to know he's on track.

We trekked through bamboo and palm groves and around 1,500 metres the vegetation changed to lower montane forest, the trees covered with moss and lichens. Further up the landscape was marked by bonsai-like short shrubs. Patches of moss and lichens in shades of green, red, yellow and brown covered the ground, creating a spongy feel underfoot. We were actually walking on layers of roots and leaves accumulated over thousands of years.

We reached the peak after six hours of trekking and three



breathers. There was a camp site marked by a trig point with aluminum sheets. Short shrubs and pitcher plants, the main vegetation at that height, covered the summit.

It was foggy and cold that night. The thermometer we hung on the trig point showed 10°C Centigrade. Strong chilly winds forced us into our tents for most of the night, though we emerged occasionally to look at the stars above and the lights of Ipoh city way below.

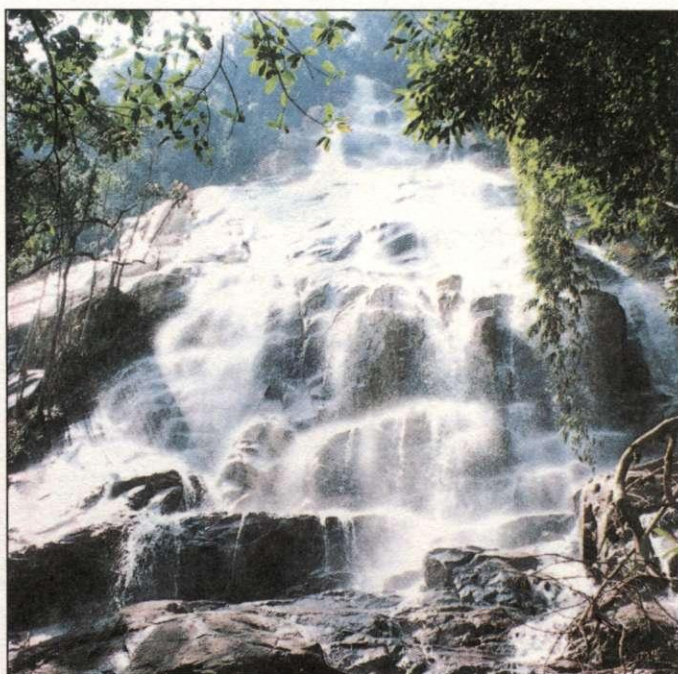
Sunrise the following morning was heralded by layers of mist dancing down valleys and rushing up ridges in the surrounding range. There was a nip in the air, and a peacefulness that only



Orang asli houses at the foot of Korbu.

balmy nature has the power to effect. We felt on top of the world, and though the climb up had been tedious in parts, it was a rejuvenating experience.

After lunch at noon we started our trek downhill. We reached the last water point after three hours, stopped for a break before resuming our way to the logging track where our 4WD vehicle was waiting.



## Road to nature's riches

**T**HE 26-kilometre Simpang Pulai-Pos Selim expressway in Perak offers breathtaking vistas of picturesque misty hills, waterfalls, hot springs, birds and flowers in radiant hues, and Orang Asli settlements.

Many of the limestone hills alongside the highway, however, have been scarred by quarry activities.

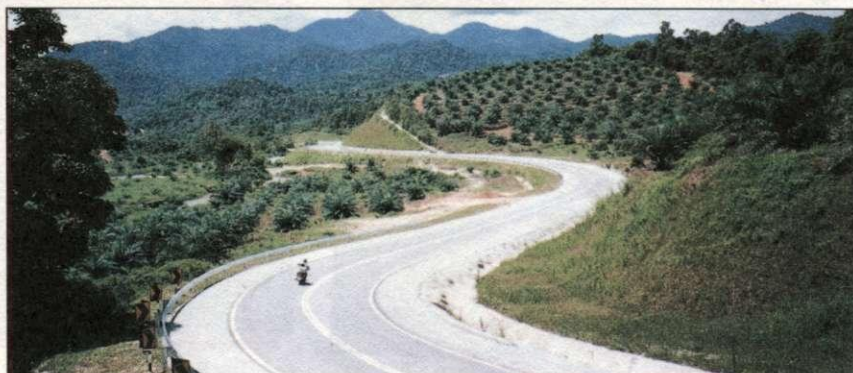
Once hidden by the lush greenery, scenic spots are easily reached by car; some, however, only by foot along rocky, steep and slippery trails. The intrepid would come across wild durians growing abundantly in the dense jungle, and the Rafflesia, the world's largest flower.

About 10km from the entrance to the expressway is a break in the iron railings where an earth road leads to some oil palm estates. A short distance away is former water intake. A stream from that point leads to a hot spring and picnic spot.

Further up the main road is a multi-tiered waterfall that used to take an hour's trek to reach. Now a logging track leads right to the waters.

The expressway ends at Kampung Pos Selim, an Orang Asli settlement of about 300 people, mostly padi planters and fruit growers.

(The junction of the Simpang Pulai-Pos Selim expressway is located opposite the Simpang Pulai police station, about 8km from Ipoh. Refreshments can be obtained at Simpang Pulai or from stalls outside the village if one is planning to picnic in the jungle.) — **F. Tim**



A section of the Simpang Pulai-Pos Selim expressway (above). A multi-tiered waterfall (top) is one of the scenic restful spots off the highway.



If the proverbial cat lived in a longhouse in Sarawak, the mat he sat on was worth looking at. It was smooth and cool, decorated with stylised patterns tastefully arranged and named after the jungle from which the materials had been gathered: bird's eye, leech, bamboo shoot, curling tendril, fruit. Mats show spiders, lizards, stars ...



## MATTERS AT HAND

Story and pictures by Heidi Munan

**M**atmaking has a long tradition on the island of Borneo. Once upon a time, mats were almost the only furniture found inside the family rooms of a longhouse. There were mats for sitting on, mats for sleeping, mats for drying farm and jungle produce, mats for quickly wrapping or covering something. Mats could be used as sails, though canvas was preferred wherever it was available. Huge sturdy mats were

sometimes specially wrought not just for covering, but for strengthening the floor.

Only the last-named type of mat is traditionally made by men. It is woven out of inch-wide strips of beaten tree bark, the tough type that used to serve as clothing in the old days, and strong lengths of split *rotan* (malacca cane). This mat is very large, two by three metres or even bigger, and is used for heavy-duty work: to dry farm

produce in bulk, or to reinforce the floor when a large number of people is expected. In preparation for one of the grand parties called *gawai*, when each longhouse family expects a hundred or more guests in its rooms, it is customary to strengthen the floors of the whole house by under-pinning them with extra support pillars, and overlaying them with this kind of big, rough mat.

Sleeping mats, or "pri-

Left: The Penans make mats out of very fine rotan dyed black in parts. Above and top left: Large, sturdy mats of bark and rotan are sometimes used to strengthen the floor of the longhouse.



vate" sitting mats, are another matter; let no woman try to bring out her second-rate mats when a critical aunt pays a visit! The experts judge a mat by its fineness. Fine strands of reed, split rotan or screwpine leaf are used, tightly woven to produce a smooth surface, fine patterns are worked into the fabric. Some mats are bi- or multicoloured, some self-coloured; some have an angular pattern like plaid, others have "flowers" or even stories worked into their smooth surface. But they are all made by women, the longhouse farmers' wives, in their free time.

Plain matmaking, like knitting,



Bemban, the raw material for sleeping mats

is not considered an art. Unlike weaving, it is a craft which any girl can and should learn. Grandmothers occasionally complain that their granddaughters, having been to school, are "quite useless — she can't cook, she can't mind babies, she can't even make a mat!" Most Borneo peoples make their mats on the x or the bias, starting at a corner and working diagonally from there. This permits the skilled plaiter to work some very pretty geometric designs into the fabric. But the beginner has other things to worry about: the finished product must

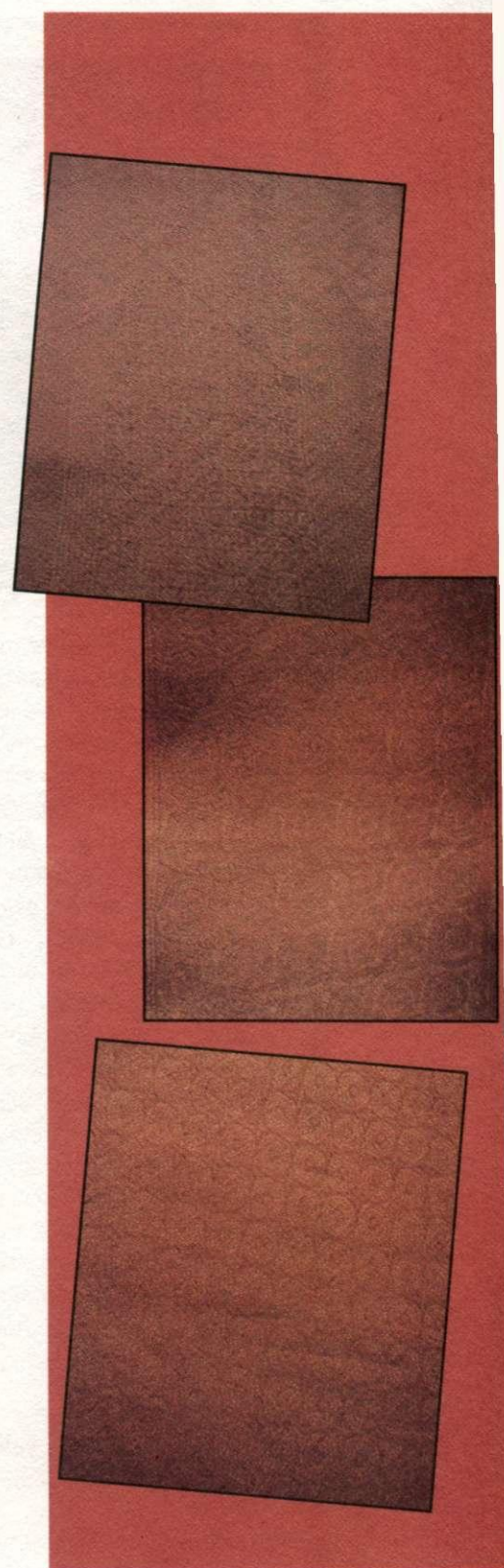
be a true rectangle, not a wobbly trapeze!

The patterns in a mat are considered purely decorative by most people, though some Sabah tribes used to depict lively stories in their reedwork. A marriage proposal could be conveyed discreetly through a mat, made by the suitor's mother and presented to the young lady's family. The answer could be an equally encouraging mat as a return present, or a discreet refusal expressed in elegantly woven images of separation and discord.

The mat patterns are nearly always regular, and symmetrically applied. The Ot Danum people of Indonesian Kalimantan, however, represent picturesque scenes of this world and the next in their matwork. Such mats, rare even in Kalimantan, were not used for ordinary purposes, but only displayed at special ceremonies. The preferred place for doing all kinds of handicraft in the

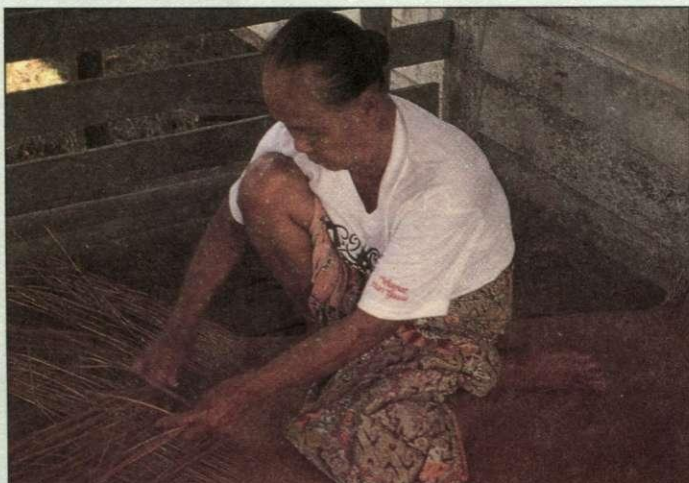
longhouse is on the wide verandah, in company with friends, so industry and chit-chat can go together — rather like village women in Europe used to have their knitting ready in an apron pocket, to be pulled out and worked on while the latest neighbourhood gossip was retailed. Many Sarawak women, even those living in town, keep a piece of reedwork handy for any free moment.

Various materials qualify as "reeds" in this context. The most abundant is bamboo, used to make some baskets and souvenir



Mats may have a central panel of "star" design (top). This type is from Gedong, in the lower Sadong River. Or they may have a spiral-shaped design (middle) or a circular design (bottom).





## MATERIAL GAIN

Ani anak Munan has made mats since she was a young girl. She learnt from her mother, "who else? Cooking, child-minding, farming — we learn these things from our mothers. My daughters learnt from me..."

Ani belongs to the westernmost Iban tribe, the Sibuyau. She lives in Kampung Stunggang, near Lundu. Travellers on the way to the beach at Sematan have to ferry across the big Kayan River here. Jungle produce and handicrafts are often sold at ferry jetties. Does Ani sell mats there?

"No, never have. It's not our custom." So where does she store all the beautiful mats she makes, for she is one of the village experts? Married daughters sometimes ask for a mat; relatives from town occasionally let it be known that a present of a mat would be welcome. Does she just give her masterpieces away?" She smiles. "Well, I let it be known that a present of something useful from town would be welcome, too..."

On this particular day, the rice has been harvested and stored away in bark bins, the gardens have been tended. Ani's husband, Sapin, has taken his shotgun and disappeared in the jungle. There are no pressing chores just now. The matmaker can work undisturbed, fashioning the beautiful involuted designs passed down from mother to daughter.

items like table mats and wall hangings, but not sitting or sleeping mats.

Bamboo is too brittle for utility mats; it isn't very comfortable to sit on, and it would break with constant use.

Various types of pandan leaves (*Pandanus spp*) are used to make mats, such as the colourful plaid "Bajau mats" of Sabah. The rather porous pandan leaf absorbs dyes

easily, but it isn't very durable. By far the most resilient mat material is rotan, known as "malacca cane" in the furniture trade.

Rotan grows as a very thorny vine in the deep jungle. Stripped of its protective cover, the smooth cane comes in many grades and thicknesses; furniture can be built out of it. For the *tikai lampit*, whole, pencil-thick lengths of rotan are used. The pieces are laid side by

side, perforated at set distances and "threaded" on a tough fibre. The edges are plaited for stability. More commonly, rotan is stripped, and only the pliable smooth skin is used for making either mats or baskets.

Another favourite matmaking material, especially for sleeping mats, is the shrubby reed *bemban* (*Clinogyne dichotoma*). With a little tending, this plant grows well in any swampy spot near the long-houses. The cut stems have to be stripped of their skin. The strips in turn are carefully scraped and trimmed to a standard width. The plaiting material, now dried to a warm buff colour, is soaked in water before work begins; this is to ensure a really tight mat.

Sarawak's Iban women excel at this kind of work. Even in communities where weaving is no longer practised, matmaking remains. Some housewives make mats and basketry to earn a little pin-money. Their produce may be seen in country bazaars, at roadside stalls, and in the Main Bazaar in Kuching. By the time it reaches a shop, a good quality sleeping mat is worth between RM100 and 125.



Mats in assorted sizes on sale at a bazaar in Kuching



By Fay Khoo

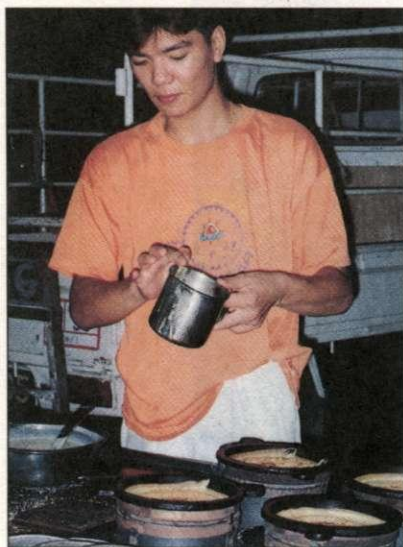
# OLD TREATS, OLD SWEETS

*Some things remain staunchly immutable, even in the onslaught of development and sophistication of lifestyles and tastes. One of these is Penang's culinary sub-culture.*

**W**ith almost irreverent nonchalance, hawkers straddle the cramped, busy streets of Penang, peddling their wares and spinning their noodles.

Never mind that the stalls are a somewhat incongruous frontage for spanking new commercial complexes. Penangites and tourists flock to these hawkers in droves, drawn by the unpretentious aromas and the wholesome flavours of these local gastronomic delicacies.

Penang desserts are a phenomenon quite unlike any other. Using primitive miniature clay ovens and antique brass pans, and little else besides flour, eggs, sugar, and coal, the most marvellous concoctions are laboriously conjured by these hawkers to test even the most resistant dieter.



Transcending cultural boundaries, the desserts are universally endearing. Indeed, who can resist the temptations of a steaming hot Indian *apom*? Light as the finest muslin and discreetly aromatic, it is a popular snack among Penangites. Some *apom* connoisseurs claim the tastiest on the island is to be had at a coffeshop on the corner opposite the Pulau Tikus police station, and at the Pulau Tikus night market.

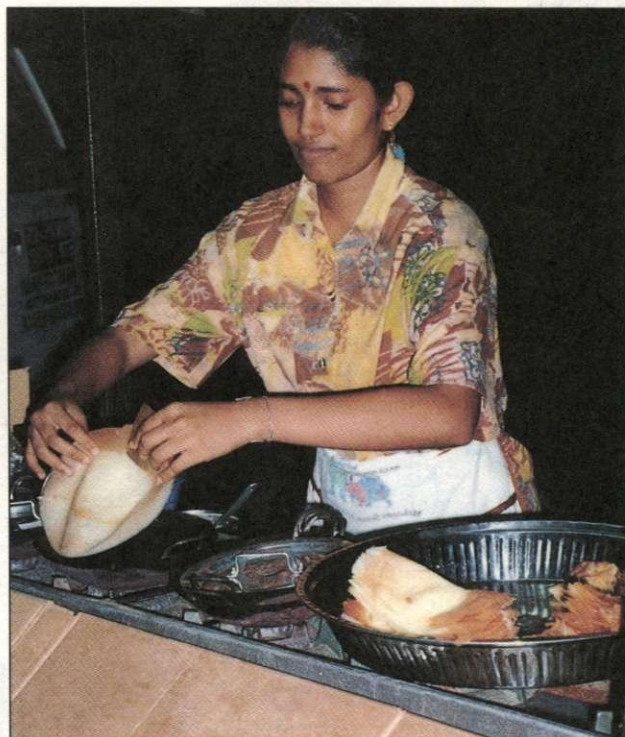
Equally popular is the Chinese

Delectable desserts:  
*Apom* (right) and *ban chang koay* (left)

*ban chang koay*. Found at several scattered but specific locations around Penang, this dessert is immensely popular and a well-made version of this "cake" — crispy on the sides and chewy in the middle — can inspire.

Using the simplest of ingredients — sugar, flour, eggs and butter — the dessert is individually prepared on miniature coal-fired clay pots. First, the batter is spread onto the pots and left to simmer. After it has thickened and turned a delicious golden hue, a handful of white sugar is sprinkled over it, followed by a sprinkling of crushed peanuts, fine as sesame seeds. Several minutes later, and depending on the order — some ask for extra egg yolk and sweet corn — the cake is briskly whisked off the pot and neatly dispatched in a little paper wrapping.

These Chinese pancakes are sold mostly in the afternoons and at night, depending on the vendors. Teatime *ban chang koay* can be bought from a vendor at the traffic lights junction outside the Ban Hin Lee Bank. There is an excellent *ban chang*



*koay* hawker most evenings in the Fettes hawker area. The pancake is also sold at the Kimberley Street hawker centre.

The simplicity of eating these sweets means they can be consumed any time, any place. The sight of Penangites gulping down the last of a still warm *ban chang koay* while dashing after the bus is not unusual.

Another delight is the Indian *puttu piring* which consists of a rich *gula Melaka* (brown sugar) filling wrapped in a light-as-mousse coconut case. Sold mostly in the evenings by matronly Indian ladies, this dessert is made by hand, mounds of ground coconut painstakingly transformed into delicate morsels. *Puttu piring* has become more elusive than other sweets, but one stall may be found amongst the Fettes Park hawkers.

Most of these hawkers enjoy a following; probably the reason they continue to peddle their sweets, come rain or shine. But they are increasingly a rare sight, even in the thriving food haven of Penang.



# TRANSFRONTIER

## TREASURE

*Within the bosom of the Lanjak-Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary in Sarawak resides a gene pool of unparalleled diversity, a wealth exceeding anything a human treasury can hold.*

By N. Gopinath

Spanning almost 200,000 hectares, the Lanjak-Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary in Sarawak is testimony to the immense wealth that resides in the primeval Malaysian rainforest.

In this ancient repository of wood and waterways live the largest assemblages of animal and plant life known to man.

In less than a year, scientists have discovered new species of plant, amphibian and reptile life. Thousands more remain to be identified.

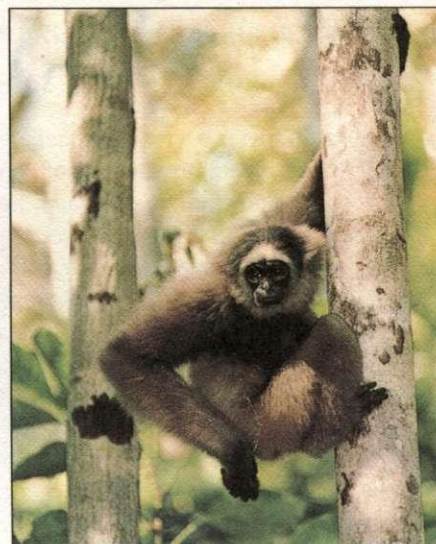
In its complex ecosystems lie thousands of biochemicals, pharmaceuticals, drugs ... a plethora of products which could have a profound impact on mankind's future.

But Lanjak-Entimau goes beyond that. It is part of a transnational reserve that will eventually straddle 200 kilometres of the Malaysian-Indonesian border, covering almost a million hectares of rainforest on the island of Borneo.

On the Malaysian side, Lanjak-Entimau is flanked by the Batang Ai National Park, and in Indonesia, plans are underway to gazette huge tracts of forest as a nature reserve called Bentuang-Karimun.

Together, the Lanjak-Entimau/Bentuang-Karimun biodiversity conservation area will form the world's largest transnational tropical rainforest conservation reserve.

Not only is the bilateral project an incomparable natural heritage, it is a symbol of collaboration between two developing nations to ensure the perpetuity and sustain-



Above: Bornean Gibbon.  
Left: Montane mossy forests.  
Top left: Little Blue-eared Barbet

ability of their resources.

Lanjak-Entimau/Bentuang-Karimun stands out as a beacon of common commitment to the environment, a resolve between neighbouring countries to preserve at all cost what is probably the world's most valuable natural resource.

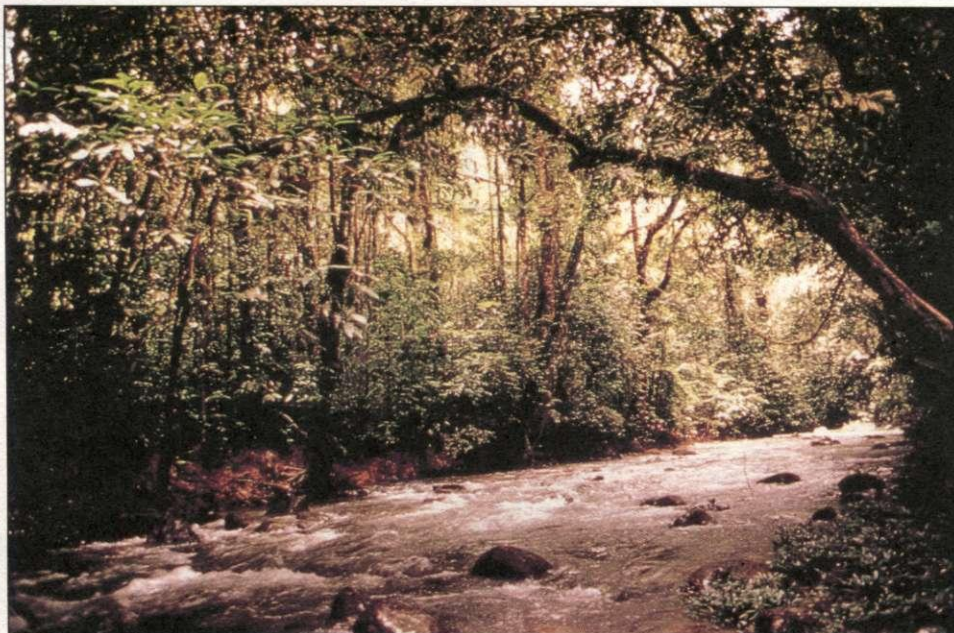
Right behind the Malaysian and Indonesian governments, the International Tropical Timber Organisation has funded preliminary resource inventory projects leading to the preparation of a management plan for the whole area.

In Sarawak, a multi-disciplinary

team of scientists and other experts have been trying to evaluate and document Lanjak-Entimau's riches. Just one year into the study, they have already discovered a mind-boggling array of life forms.

The area is of enormous antiquity, formed over 60 to 75 million years ago during the Eocene. The forests in Lanjak-Entimau, drained by the Mujuk and Katibas Rivers, headwaters of the mighty Rajang, are unique, with over 1,000 tree species having been identified so far, three of them newly-discovered and never documented before.





Riparian forest

Up in the highlands, the harsh, windy climes have created a new dimension in rainforest ecology. Where typical rainforest is dark and dank, the environment here is just the opposite.

An unusual forest type has evolved and even thrived on the narrow summit ridges of the 4,200 feet Mt. Lanjak where the almost constant exposure to clouds and mists have created a mossy forest.

Further down the slopes, there is a small tract of old secondary jungle, a sort of halfway house in the evolution of the rainforest. About 130 years ago, the forest was cleared by a community of Ibans. When they left, the jungle reclaimed the farms and the clearings began to regenerate into a new forest.

Among the mammals that roam Lanjak-Entimau are the rarest of animals in the world. On the forest floor the Clouded Leopard stalks its prey with the same feared enthusiasm as its cousin, the tiger, on the Malaysian mainland.

A polyglot of wildlife from bears to tiny squirrels also pervades the jungle corridors and thickets.

Of the primates, the orang-utan, among the most endangered of apes, presents a stark profile. Lanjak-Entimau is host to one of the largest populations of orang-utans in the world — over 400 individuals have been counted. This fact makes the sanctuary critical as it is one of

the last major strongholds of this rapidly disappearing ape.

It is in the conservation of the orang-utans that the true significance of Lanjak-Entimau/Bentuang-Karimun is revealed. The transfrontier area is contiguous, allowing the apes and other wildlife to cross frontiers with a similar sense of protection on either side of an international border.

Another exclusive member of Borneo's wildlife that has made the reserve its home is the Bornean Gibbon.

The primates are not the only



Above: An orang-utan. Left: Pitcher plants.

denizens of the trees. Tropical rainforests are immense repositories of birdlife, their varieties and colours incomparable with any other ecosystem.

There are over 214 bird species in Lanjak-Entimau, of which 13 are endemic to Borneo. Only 10 are migratory. The avian diversity in Lanjak-Entimau is testimony to its

pristine soul.

There is also a bewildering variety of reptiles and amphibians, and already, a new snake species has been discovered. More, undoubtedly, lurk in the undergrowth waiting for their day in the sun.

The inventory is just the beginning. Already, a comprehensive management plan is in the offing. When fully implemented by the government of Sarawak, there will be a Science Centre and a network of ranger stations to help protect the sanctuary from intruders as well as

support researchers.

The authorities have quite correctly intended that Lanjak-Entimau be more than just an ivory tower for academia. The Science Centre will also be educational, allowing more people to enjoy and appreciate the magnificent treasures of their own resources. Greater awareness for the wealth and delicate nature of wildlife can be anticipated.

In this respect, the Lanjak-Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary would have made a major contribution that will span generations, standing out as a treasure in the making.



Up in Kudat, Sabah, the Rungus people have retained many of the old ways, from the blessing of the homestead to their music and weaving methods.

By Rosemary Chin Garces

**K**udat is a three-and-a-half-hour drive from Kota Kinabalu, capital of Sabah, through mostly idyllic countryside, passing Tuaran and Kota Belud towns on the way. A breathtaking view of Mt. Kinabalu, Southeast Asia's highest mountain, appears ever so often along the route.

Kudat is also known as Rungus country. The Rungus, a sub-group of the Dusunic people, have an interesting lifestyle and no visit would be complete without stopping by their unique longhouses known

THAM YAW KONG



as *binatang*. Up to a hundred people may live under one roof, with families occupying separate units called *valai*. There is a common living area running the length of the longhouse where most of the daily activities take place.

Previously animists, the Rungus have mostly converted to Christianity and have abandoned many of their ancient beliefs. But certain rituals and customs are still observed.

One such ritual is the *manavaru*

or blessing of a new longhouse. The *bobohizan* or priest invokes the spirit of the jungle with offerings of betel nut and tobacco so that no harm would befall the occupants.

Prayers are chanted as incensed torches of twined bark are carried down the corridor touching each ceiling beam. Then follows a feast of

chicken and buffalo meat dishes, and rice wine drunk from bamboo cups. Traditional dances such as the *monggigol* and *sumirid* are performed.

A newly completed longhouse at Kg Bavanggazo was the venue of such a ritual recently. It was a village community project to promote homestay visits for visitors to expe-

## RHYTHMS OF THE

TOMMY CHANG



Above: Rungus musicians. Left: Tourists dancing the Mongigol in the longhouse. Below: The Binatang, home of the Rungus.

TOMMY CHANG





# RUNGUS



rience the Rungus way of life.

Nestled deep in the forest in a small clearing, the longhouse is cool and well-ventilated, built of bark walls, a thatched roof, woven palm leaves for doors and floors of split bamboo. The only modern fit-

TOMMY CHANG



SABAH TOURISM PROMOTION CORPORATION



Rungus women pounding rice, and preparing yarn for cloth weaving (left)

tings are flush toilets installed for the convenience of visitors.

The Rungus are well-known for their beadwork; turning tiny colourful beads into beautifully designed necklaces and bracelets. Seeds from the forest are dyed and fashioned into accessories. They also weave boxes and plates from a type of vine and grass; these items are known as

*renago*. Cloth for their traditional costumes is still woven on the back-strap handloom, and natural dyes are used.

More information on Rungus longhouse homestays can be obtained from the Sabah Tourism Promotion Corporation, Locked Bag 112, 88999 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Tel: 088-212121, Fax: 088-212075.

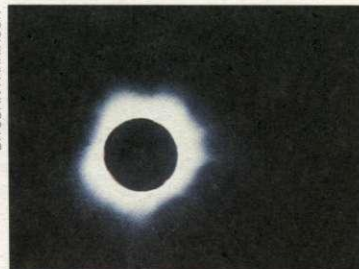
## ECLIPSE OVER KUDAT

ONE of Nature's most amazing spectacles — a total solar eclipse — will occur over Kudat, Sabah's northernmost town later this year. The observation period for total darkness will be its longest since the start of the solar journey just south of the Caspian Sea.

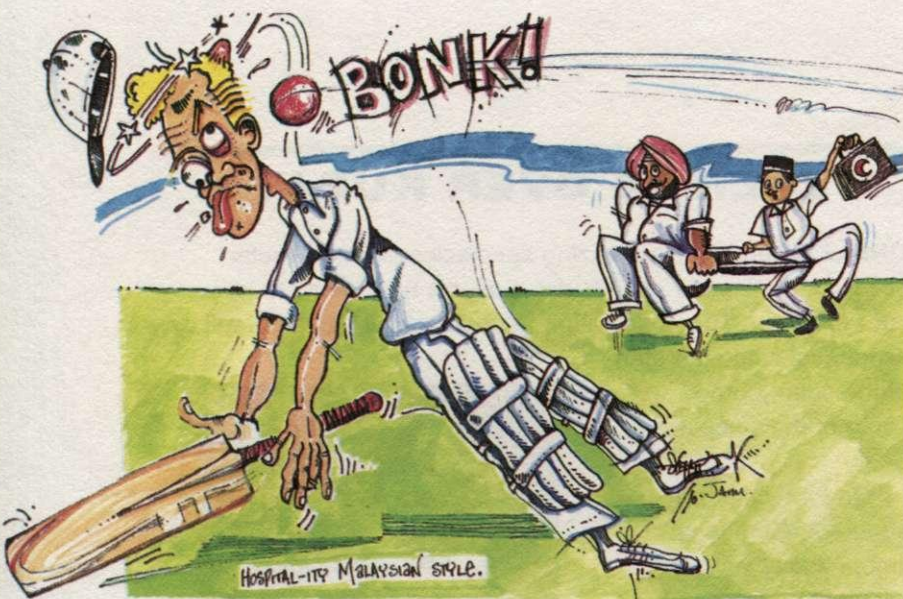
On 24 October at about 12.45pm local time, midday will turn to midnight as the moon moves to cover the sun, causing it to cast a long shadow through space. From about 11am, observers in Kudat district will see the sun take on a crescent shape, shrinking steadily until the eclipse is total. This is considered the only safe time to look at the sun.

It will be 47 years before the next total eclipse over Sabah occurs on 20 April 2042.

DR JOHN PARKINSON







## Foreigner touched by helpful and kind Malaysians

I AM on my first visit to Malaysia as a member of the Cryptics cricket team from England. Two incidents in the first four days of my stay have made impressions that I am sure will remain with me for a long time.

On April 3, I played golf at the Tropicana complex and on arriving back by taxi at the city centre, I soon realised that my wallet and bank cards were missing. I wandered into the reception area of an adjacent hotel and attempted to work out whether the English banks were still open.

Suddenly, a hotel employee appeared carrying a board with my name written on it. A woman stood nearby with my wallet in her hand. She was the wife of the taxi driver and had found the wallet on the back seat.

It was a great relief for me and I would like to thank the woman, her husband and the people of

Malaysia for restoring my faith in the human race. I would certainly not have expected such good fortune in London or many other parts of the world.

The next day, I was playing cricket at Merdeka Square. When batting, I was struck on the side of my head by the ball.

I was carried from the wicket in a groggy state and immediately ferried by car to the Pantai Medical Centre where I was examined and X-rayed by their excellent staff.

I would like to thank Charlie Cheliah, Edwin and Abdul of the Royal Selangor Club as well as the staff of Pantai Medical Centre for the wonderful help and treatment.

I will certainly spread the good news about your country on my return to England.

**Philip Spray**  
**Kuala Lumpur**

(Excerpts from a letter published in *The New Straits Times*, 13 April 1995)

Readers are welcome to send in their views, opinions and comments with regard to the Malaysian tourism industry. Please address letters to:  
The Editor, MALAYSIA TOURISM,  
Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board,  
P.O. Box 10328, 50710 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

## THANK YOU FOR THE EXTRA EFFORT

I WRITE this to thank several individuals who helped me in a dire emergency on April 23.

At 9pm I went to the Subang International Airport to catch a flight via Singapore to Geneva to attend an important conference, organised by Unctad, of all world investment promotion agencies.

On arrival at Subang, wrongly at Terminal 1 and having to rush to Terminal 2, my passport fell from my jacket. That started three hours of trauma, but the wonderful support from some of the staff should not go unmentioned.

Firstly I would like to thank the anonymous person who found my passport and handed it to the security officer at Terminal 1. Secondly I would like to thank the security officer of Malaysia Airports Bhd. (I think his name is Aziz) on duty that night. Not only was he sympathetic and understanding, he took the trouble to run to the Balai Polis to hand the passport to me. I would also like to thank the staff at the Balai Polis who were very helpful.

A special thanks to George Joseph of Matsushita in Sungei Way who responded to my appeal and drove me from Terminal 2 to Terminal 1 because all the taxi stations had massive queues.

Finally a big thank you to all SIA staff at Terminal 2 — especially to Encik Zulkarnain Taib, Senior Traffic Officer, Singapore Airlines who rushed to Terminal 1 to pick me up, then worked out possible routes and finally found one I could take to Geneva on April 24 to arrive in time for the conference.

The earnestness with which Encik Zulkarnain and his colleague Mr Hiew Sing Poon, Senior Customer Service Officer, sought all alternatives and even tried to get me into other airlines to meet my schedule, is greatly appreciated.

As long as there are Malaysians like all these people, Malaysians can be happy that though we have modernised, we have not lost our soul.

**Datuk J. Jegathesan**  
**Malaysia Industrial Development Authority**

(Excerpts from a letter published in *The Star*, 28 April 1995)



When my Malaysian friend who is working for Tourism Malaysia and now doing research in Japan asked me to visit Malaysia, I agreed without hesitation.

I've been very interested in Malaysia, especially the religion, food and way of life of the people since my first visit to Pulau Tioman in 1992.

Although my first stay was short, I was taken up by the friendliness and warmth of Malaysians, and the picturesque views.

My second visit reinforced my first impressions of the people; they were all so friendly.

My friend took me to Malacca and Penang, and taught me many things about the history, economy and social matters of Malaysia. I'm lucky to have a native friend like him. But I'm sure most tourists can make many friends during their stay in Malaysia if their minds are open.

Upon my return to Japan, I decided to study at University of Malaya beginning this July.

Unfortunately, most Japanese don't know about Malaysia and there are few books in Japan about Malaysia.

So I will invite my family and friends to Malaysia and take them to many places. I want to write about Malaysia and hope that many Japanese people will pay more attention to Malaysia (and other Asian countries), not only to the west.

Yumiko Ando  
Japan  
8 March 1995

## Five ways to make Langkawi clean

WE RECENTLY returned from our second holiday in Malaysia. On both occasions we spent most of the time on the beautiful island of Langkawi.

However, we have noticed a marked increase in the amount of litter on some of the popular beaches.

There were empty plastic bottles, plastic bags and beer cans. Some of the garbage was washed onto the beach from passing ships and tourist boats.

The large hotels and resorts are doing a splendid job of clearing their stretch of beach, but on the whole, they are fighting a losing battle.

Most of the litter bins by the roadside were either full or overflowing. The larger skips were in a similar condition.

A more serious hazard to

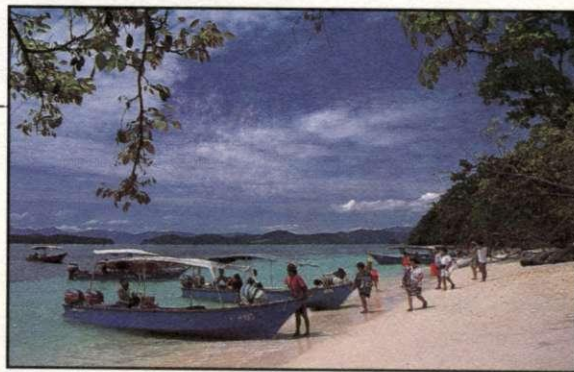
health (and limb) was the open sewers we saw at various places, including Kuah town, where pedestrian pavements were regularly crossed by smelly and garbage strewn open sewers.

We were also alarmed by what we encountered at other scenic parts of the island. For example, at the Seven Wells waterfalls, the garbage problem was serious enough, but the condition of some of the steps leading to the top was dangerous.

The solution to all the above (although not easily achieved) is not impossible. It is all a question of education and effective law enforcement.

Here are five points for consideration:

■ ISLAND tour operatives must tell their passengers that all non-biode-



gradable rubbish must be placed in supplied plastic bags and disposed of properly;

■ FINES, however small, must be imposed on those who litter, tourists and locals alike. Landowners, shopkeepers and householders must keep the area surrounding their properties clear of garbage;

■ TAMPER-PROOF bin lids must be provided at Seven Wells waterfalls or places where monkeys rummage for food and scatter the contents of the dustbins;

■ THE influence of Radio Langkawi in an anti-litter campaign cannot be under-estimated.

We did contact the station and pointed out that

they carry a great responsibility and can make a big difference in both informing and reminding everyone to do their bit;

■ A BETTER sewer system cannot come soon enough; as will regular and frequent garbage collections.

Before we can ask everyone to keep Langkawi clean (as the road signs tell us) let us do our best to clean Langkawi first.

The last thing we want is for people to say, "Don't go to Langkawi - it is too dirty and polluted."

We hope to return to a much cleaner island.

Mr & Mrs S. Alwan  
United Kingdom

(Excerpts from a letter published in *The Star*, 25 April 1995)



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Tel: 03-264-3929

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Penang International Airport,  
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Langkawi.

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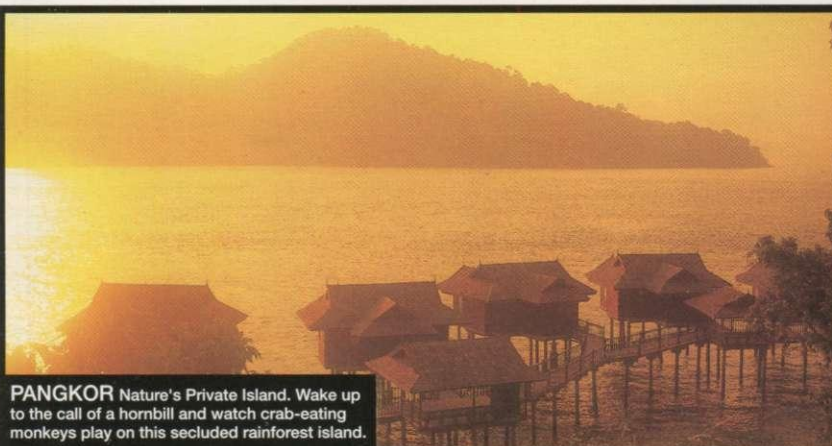
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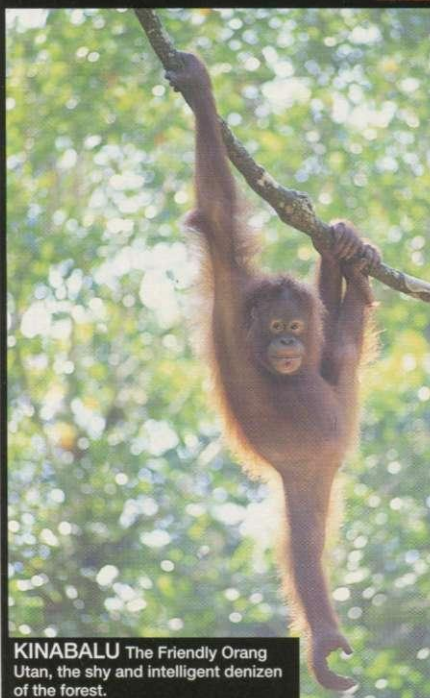
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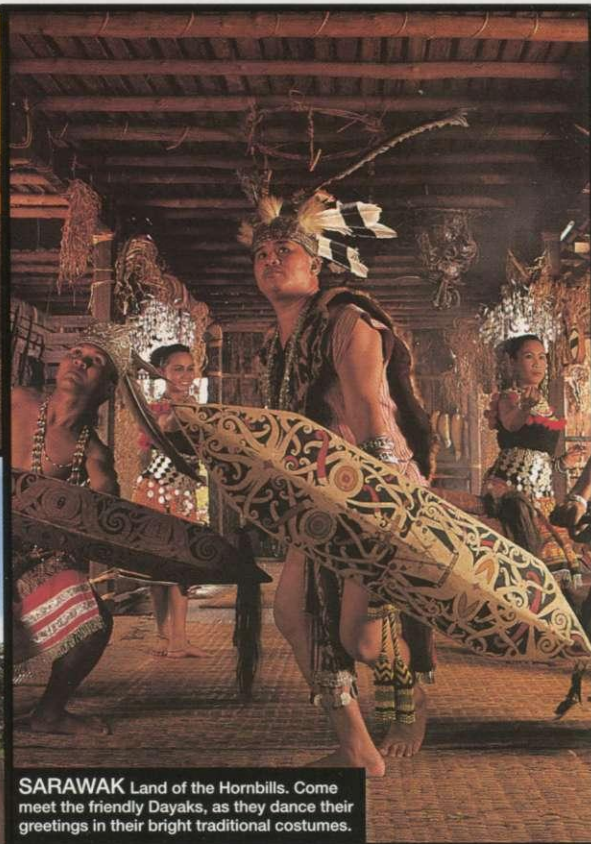


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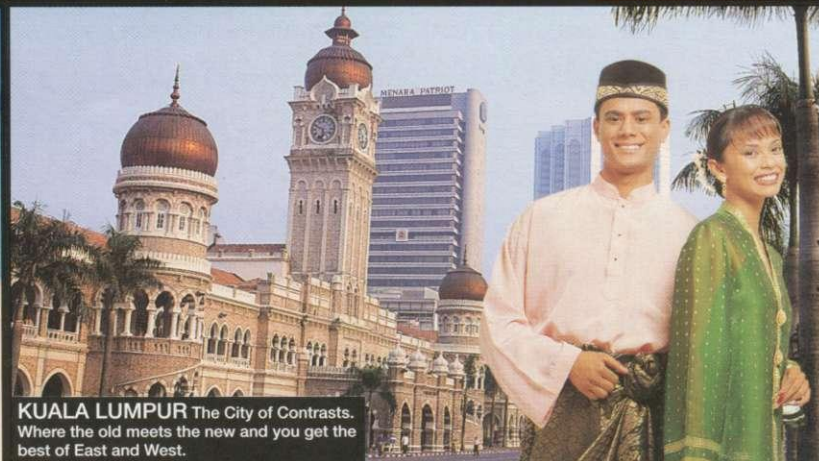
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